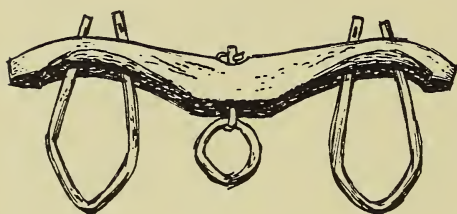


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Lincoln speaks Spanish.

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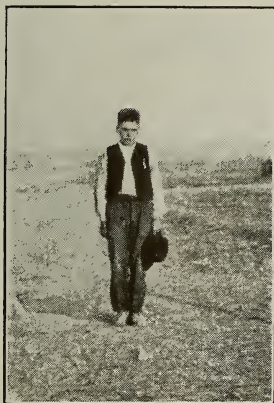
founded by
HARLAN HOYT HORNER
and
HENRIETTA CALHOUN HORNER

Hero Tale Series

A. M. A. SUNDAY
FEBRUARY, 1925

*Five Missionary Minutes
for Sunday Schools*

Lincoln Speaks Spanish



Stories from the work of
**THE AMERICAN MISSIONARY
ASSOCIATION**

287 Fourth Avenue

New York

YOU boys and girls will remember that last month we took a trip in our big airship, "Pilgrim", and visited a Sunday School near Pittsburgh, made up of children from other lands. This Sunday School was in the care of the Congregational Home Missionary Society. We are going on another voyage. This time we shall go away down to the great Southwest to the state of New Mexico. We are going to visit one of the little mountain schools which is under the care of The American Missionary Association, and get acquainted with the teacher, Senorita, as the Mexican children call her, with baby Serita, and with Felipe and his brothers, Miguel and Palos. Perhaps the best way to introduce them will be in the form of a story:

Lincoln Speaks Spanish

REV. FRANK E. HENRY

FELIPE came in from the fields on the run. It was not yet supper time though near it and he was worn out with the day's work on his father's tiny farm. Yet he hurried along as if it were noon and the dinner bell calling. Though he was no child—but a youth of nineteen—tears fell upon his cheeks as he ran. Brushing them away with his sleeve, he approached the door of his little home. A wail from within, piercing and heart-breaking, struck terror to his soul. He knew too well what to expect. His little sister had been very ill with diphtheria that morning when he went out to the field. This dreadful sound could only mean that death had come to call her.

He stepped through the low doorway into the cabin and there, white and still upon the narrow mattress, which rested on the floor, lay little Serita, his baby sister. Beside her crouched the mother, weeping bitterly and moaning over and over, "Es por Dios." "It is the will of God."

Hearing her broken words Felipe burst out, "No, mother, no! God did not will it so. If you had only let me bring the nurse! The Protestants do not let their children die. I will go for them now so that we do not lose my brothers and sisters, too."

Thereupon the boy, never stopping to heed his mother's protest, rushed from the house and raced along the single, dusty street of the little village. Two hundred people were huddled there in adobe houses. From many of these arose the same wailing cries of mourning mothers, reinforced by friends and relatives, that he had heard in his own home. Before the door of the last house upon the street Felipe stopped. This mud-walled cabin was much like the others but neater and a bit larger. Felipe knocked loudly. The door opened at once.

"Buenos noches Senorita," began poor Felipe, bursting into tears.

"What's the matter Felipe, tell me in English, I don't know Spanish well enough."

"Ah, Senorita! My littel sister—she die. My baby plaything. What now can I do at the night time to play, when I work no more. Ah, my littel Serita."

"Poor Felipe, I'm so sorry! But you did not come so fast to tell me this. You want something. What can I do for you?"

"Si, Senorita Margaret. Yes, yes, I want something. Come queek. My brothers and sisters. They go see baby, then die too. Come tell them go off. Bring acuma; maybe save young girls. Keep them from die. Come! Will you come? Please Senorita."

"Yes, Felipe, of course I will come right away. Run ahead. Keep the children out of the house."

"Ah, gracias, Senorita, gracias!" and Philipe bounded away. He found his brothers. Miguel and Palos, in tears at the doorway. They had just returned from the field. He caught them vigorously by the arm as they were about to enter. "Stay out, stay out," he cried, "or you will get the plague. Go to Uncle John's to eat and sleep, he has no children."

"We want to see littel Serita and kiss her good-bye," they sobbed.

"Not so, brothers. One funeral is enough. We have let the baby die. I won't let you die too. Go along. Look through the window once, then run."

The boys slipped to the tiny window, looked a moment, then slowly walked with bowed heads down the street.

Nurse Margaret came soon with her anti-toxin and with Felipe's assistance treated the three young sisters who had been in or near the house all day. The poor mother still softly crying, would not help them, but no longer opposed the plan to save, if possible, the rest of her family. Days of illness followed, desperate days and long, interminable nights. But thanks to the nurse's skill and the faithful care of Felipe, who left

the farm work to the other boys, their sisters were saved. Their house was the only one in the village where but a single child had died from the fatal disease. Two or three, or even more, were taken from many homes because of the ignorant, careless custom of allowing, almost forcing, relatives to caress the dead.

Some years before these events Felipe had gone from this little mountain village in New Mexico to the Rio Grande Industrial School at Albuquerque, maintained by The American Missionary Association. There he had picked up a little English and some knowledge of American ways of living and working. But, unfortunately after a few months he had been forced to return to his home because his father had been injured and lost his eyesight in an accident. Felipe must therefore become responsible for the family of nine, dependent now upon what he, with the help of his younger brothers, could do. This was hard but not impossible, for the three younger boys had been taught to work on the little patch of ground and Felipe had learned from the school farm, even in the short time he was there, many better ways of working.

But the lad still had a glimpse of the paradise of knowledge, at the mission where now for several years he had been attending night school. There he had acquired a reading knowledge of English and learned to talk fairly well when not excited. He also attended their little mission Sunday school where his strong, sweet, tenor voice led the singing. After the nurse's skill had saved the three little girls, their mother permitted him to take them with him to the mission.

One January Sunday Miss Margaret was looking over her mail after Sunday school and Felipe was helping her by picking up papers and arranging chairs when he heard a sudden exclamation from his teacher.

"What for you speak so?" he asked.

"Oh, Felipe here is the best program for Lincoln Sunday that I have ever seen, but it is too hard for our little folks. It is beautiful but they could never learn so many English words and such long ones. What a pity."

"Me see," said Felipe. "Ah!" he spoke softly. "Lincoln, Lincoln!"

He took the program looking steadily at the picture on the cover, then lifted it to his lips, tears stood in his eyes as he said, "Mexicans need Lincoln." He turned away with the program in his hands and left the house.

Felipe did not come to read that night as was his custom on Sunday evening, nor did he appear through the following week for his regular lessons. The teachers wondered at his absence but felt sure that all must be well because he was seen upon the streets. On the following Sunday he came in just as the children were about to be dismissed.

"Wait a minute, Senorita, please," he cried. "See, we can have Lincoln program after all."

He handed the teacher two sheets,—one the printed folder he had taken the week before, the other a long strip of wrapping paper covered with fine writing which Miss Margaret recognized at once as a translation of the Lincoln Day Program.

"I be Mr. Lincoln? Please Senorita," and the boy looked up at her with pleading eyes.

The Senorita stood a moment thinking, then said softly: "Felipe, look at me." Inflamed eyes looked at her from shadows that showed even on his dark skin. Hands trembled that had always been steady.

"Felipe, you sat up nights to do this."

"Yes, Senorita."

"Last night too, Felipe?"

"Yes, Senorita, all night, so children have it today, so practice and get program on his birthday."

The girl steadied her voice, then said huskily, "Felipe, why did you work so hard for us?"

"Hard, ah yes," and he put his hand to his smarting eyes and then to his head. "Pain bad now. Go soon."

"But people should not make themselves sick Felipe."

"But Senorita, you know when littel sister die, you come all day, all night, all week, many nights, make girls well. Gracias, Senorita, gracias."

When Lincoln's Day came the village crowded the confines of the little school room to suffocation. The blind father sat on the front seat. The mother slipped in and sat by the door, her two boys standing near. The program began with the salute to the flag, then followed hymns, through which the silvery tones of Felipe's voice could be heard, the prayer, the responses by the school and the National Hymn, brought them to the teacher's reading.

"One hundred fourteen years ago Abraham Lincoln was born." As she finished Felipe stepped to the platform to take Lincoln's part; drawing himself to his full height, he lifted his face and began. His voice vibrated with emotion but kept steadily on to the climax.

"I do not see the far future. For me night fell on noon and I left my work unfinished. It is for you to complete. Let every man remember that to violate the law is to tear asunder the charter of his own and his children's liberty. Let reverence for the law be taught in school and college. 'With malice toward none and charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in.'"

Felipe stood a moment looking upward. It seemed that he must see the man he impersonated, a look of devotion wreathed his face in a smile. Then he turned to his seat and sat quietly by his father, who whispered in his ear, "America my boy, no more Mexico."

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